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COMMERCE FOR USPTO

STATE ALSO FOR IO/T LAURA LUFTIG, AF/EPS, AND AF/E

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [WIPO](#) [KIPR](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [KE](#)

SUBJECT: KENYA CONSIDERS JAPAN'S YO TAKAGI AS STRONGEST WIPO
DIRECTOR GENERAL CANDIDATE

REF: STATE 47559

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.
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¶2. (SBU) In the absence of Kenya Copyright Board (KCB) Acting Director Marisella Ouma, on May 8 Econoff spoke separately with KCB Senior State Counsel Edward Sigei, Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) Chief Trademark Examiner Sylvance Sange, and KIPI Chief Patent Examiner Joseph Mbeva about the upcoming election of a new World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Director General (reftel). All three agreed that the five leading candidates, including KIPI Director General Dr. James Otieno Odek, are strong contenders, with Sigei remarking that, in his estimation, the Japanese nominee, Yo Takagi, appears to be the frontrunner following weeks of lobbying. "He is a very strong candidate, who had a head start over the others in campaigning for the position. The Mexican candidate (Jorge Amigo) is also a serious professional, well-known, with a congenial demeanor. The Australian (Dr. Francis Gurry) I consider a dark horse," Sigei continued.

¶3. (SBU) The three Kenyans were openly gratified that the United States considers Dr. Odek among the most qualified with Sange confiding that Odek (who is already in Geneva) is personally pleased that the U.S. delegation has not summarily dismissed his candidacy on the basis of geography. "Dr. Odek is a competent, highly qualified professional, who should be judged on his merits and not be disadvantaged because he is an African. Notions that the job should not go to an African because the previous DG (Kamil Idris) was from Sudan goes against meritocracy," Sange stressed. Geographical considerations come up too frequently, he bemoaned. In Sigei's view, "geography is unfortunate but that's just the way it is." Kenya and its mission in Geneva, he claimed, should be working harder to convince the Americans, Arabs, Asians, and others to support Odek. There is even no guarantee that he will take the African bloc. African nations with a predominately Muslim population, Mbeva posited, may well opt to support either Dr. Toufiq Ali from Bangladesh or Pakistan's Masood Khan.

Ranneberger